

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. First, it wouldn't allow it's stations to air the tribute to soldiers who gave their lives in Iraq because its management apparently doesn't feel honoring the troops is important if some right-wingers think it shows how wrong the war really was, and now it's airing a documentary apparently smearing a man for standing up against a war that, today, is almost universally considered a U.S. mistake and justifying it by calling this 30+ year old story "news." If Sinclair is allowed to force its stations to broadcast this slanted presentation and especially to call it "news," it should be forced to have its stations air the recent Bush documentary movie, as well. I would guess that the movie's distributors would let Sinclair air the movie royalty free!

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.